

Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D.C. 20505

Executive Registry

86- 5908

22 December 1986

The Honorable Jesse Helms  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Helms:

I am replying to your letter of November 20 concerning SS-18 warheads. [redacted]

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The judgment articulated in the last issue of NIE 11-3/8-86 -- and held principally by CIA -- is that [redacted]

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there are no technical reasons "...why the Soviets could not deploy this system with 14 RVs. [redacted]

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[redacted] on deployed SS-18s, we judge that at least some of them are deployed with 14 RVs." An alternative view held by DIA, NSA, Air Force Intelligence, and INR, and which is also presented in NIE 11-3/8-86, is that "...while the deployment of the SS-18 Mod 4 with more than 10 RVs appears technically feasible, it would not be undertaken without further testing [redacted]

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In sum, while all agree that it is technically feasible for the Soviets to deploy the SS-18 Mod 4 with 14 RVs, there is disagreement in the Intelligence Community over whether they would have sufficient confidence in the system's operational reliability [redacted]

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[redacted] such an expression of differences is in my view not only appropriate but essential -- particularly on such an important issue. [redacted]

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Sincerely,

Robert M. Gates  
Acting Director of Central Intelligence



SECRET [redacted]

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DECL OADR

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Ltr to The Honorable Jesse Helms

D/SOVA:DJM:lr (9 December 86)

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**Memorandum for:** DDI

**FROM:** Douglas J. MacEachin



The attached may be a bit long, and if you think it needs cutting we will be happy to have your comments. Our approach was to try to be sure the DCI was informed on the nuances under what on the surface seems like a simple matter of saying "no, I did not!" The presentation of two options was less a matter of saying the second alternative is a strong contender, but rather as a vehicle to at least lay out the issue.



Douglas J. MacEachin

**Attachment:**  
As Stated

STAT

Director,

**SOVA**  
Office of Soviet Analysis

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Central Intelligence Agency  
Office of the Deputy Director for Intelligence

24 November 1986

NOTE FOR: D/OSWR  
D/SOVA

Please prepare jointly a response for the DCI to send to Senator Helms. Indicate what we have written, the degrees of uncertainty involved, and what has been said in interagency products on this subject. I would like to see the response on its way to the Director.

STAT

  
John L. Helgeson  
Associate Deputy Director  
for Intelligence

Attachment:  
Helms letter of 20 Nov 86

cc: C/ACIS

**HAND CARRY**

## EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

## ROUTING SLIP

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12	Compt				
13	D/OLL	X			
14	D/PAO				
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16	D/SOVA		X		
17	C/ACIS		X		
18	D/PAO		X		
19					
20					
21					
22					

SUSPENSE COB, 26 Nov 86  
Date

Remarks To 13: Please have coordinated response prepared for DCI signature

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*A/* Executive Secretary  
24 November 1986  
Date

3637 (10-81)

NORTH CAROLINA

86- 5474X

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 20, 1986

The Honorable William Casey  
Director of Central Intelligence  
Central Intelligence Agency  
Washington, D.C. 20505

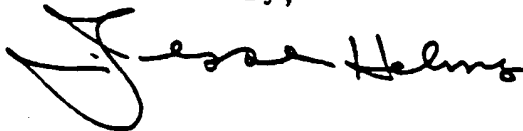
*Bell:*  
Dear Mr. Casey:

As you know, whether or not the Soviets have deployed 10 or 14 warheads on each of their super heavy SS-18 Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles is a very important intelligence and SALT II compliance question.

The press has reported that for the last several years, the CIA has estimated that the Soviets have deployed 14 warheads on each SS-18 ICBM, thus violating a key provision of SALT II. Such a deployment would add 1,232 warheads to the Soviet arsenal, but this CIA estimate is strongly supported by the evidence.

Now we are informed, however, that Mr. Douglas MacEachan, Chief of the CIA Soviet Affairs office, has ordered his analysts to prepare an erroneous estimate that there are only 10 warheads on each SS-18, contrary to the best evidence widely available in the intelligence community. If this is true, then we ask you to inform us of the reasons for such a deliberate mis-estimate contrary to the evidence.

Sincerely,



JESSE HELMS:slb

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